



Speech by

Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR STAFFORD

Hansard Thursday, 4 August 2011

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL AND APPROPRIATION BILL: INDUSTRY, EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining) (4.02 pm): It is a great pleasure to rise in this debate of the estimates committee report and in that respect acknowledge and thank the member for Toowoomba North for his skills in chairing the Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee through that estimates committee process and, indeed, the other members of the committee who contributed. This gave me a great opportunity to report to the committee and to the parliament on how the Bligh Labor government is on track to meet our 100,000 jobs target. Indeed, three recent major investments in the liquefied natural gas industry alone have the potential to create another 18,000 jobs for Queenslanders. The fact that Labor has created almost 80,000 jobs since our election promise more than two years ago demonstrates how we are on track to achieve that extraordinary goal, particularly in the face of the global financial crisis at the time of that commitment. How has this been done? It has been done with a lot of hard work and by delivering strong, sensible, workable solutions to stimulate jobs growth in Queensland.

Employment growth over the next two years is expected to support some 140,000 jobs as the state's economy enters a new wave of prosperity, with five per cent growth expected this financial year and 5.25 per cent next year. The Deloitte Access Business Outlook report released last week shows that Queensland is a magnet for massive business investment, clocking up a record \$184.5 billion in known projects for the June quarter alone. Those billions of dollars in projects mean that skilled Queensland workers will be in high demand. That is where the vocational education and training sector, and indeed our nation-leading employment programs, have a key, if not a crucial, role to play. To that end we are focused on making sure, as I was saying to the parliament earlier today, that we respond to the national reform agenda in relation to vocational education and training and are focused on reaching our target of having three out of four Queenslanders having a trade, training or tertiary qualification by 2020.

To this end we want to see public and private training and higher education providers and industry work side by side in building workforce skills. That is where things like the Queensland Skills Commission, the CEO of which was available to the estimates committee hearing to report, is all the more important in the way that it is keyed into and engaged with industry to be responsive to industry's needs as we see this massive rollout of investment and the requirements that has for the labour force needs of the state.

As part of this broader engagement we want to make sure that we respond to the needs of Queensland's labour force, and I certainly appreciated the opportunity to brief the committee in relation to that. One of those areas that we are making a great difference in is our Green Army. It was good to report on the fact that we have reached our promised target, creating 3,000 Green Army jobs, 12 months ahead of schedule. That was due in no small part to the joint state and federal governments' commitment of \$83 million to the Queensland Natural Disasters Jobs and Skills Package. I pay tribute to all of those people involved. Those Green Army workers have a certain sense of pride, and that is not a bad thing.

While we were considering the estimates the member for Mirani had an obsession with the federal government's proposals for a carbon price. During estimates he came within a hair's breadth of admitting that the scheme might actually deliver benefits to Queensland. He asked me—

... can you highlight the opportunities for small business and even the manufacturing industry to gain a competitive advantage with the carbon tax ...

I reckon someone got to him during the break, though, because he went to water. But who can blame him for supporting carbon pricing? The member for Mirani holds shares in not one, not two, but three clean energy companies. He has hit the trifecta! They are not just any clean energy companies, either; they are the ones that feature in the Commonwealth government's Clean Energy Future TV ads. There is the member for Mirani onto a smart thing for once.